United Nations A/66/395–S/2011/611

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
4 October 2011

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 37
Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Note verbale dated 28 September 2011 from the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 17 September 2011 from the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, on the recognition of the State of Palestine and its admission as a full member of the United Nations (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations formally requests the Secretary-General to circulate this letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 28 September 2011 from the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

I address these words to the United Nations General Assembly, to this great forum where all the peoples of the earth are represented, to confirm, on this day and in this setting, Venezuela's full support for the recognition of the Palestinian State and of Palestine's right to become a free, sovereign and independent country. It is an act of historic justice towards a people that has always carried within it all the pain and suffering of the world.

In his memorable essay "The Grandeur of Arafat", the great French philosopher Gilles Deleuze wrote with the full weight of the truth when he stated that the Palestinian cause is first and foremost a set of injustices that these people have suffered and continue to suffer. And, I dare add, the Palestinian cause also represents a constant and unyielding will to resist that is already inscribed in the heroic memory of the human condition. A will to resist that springs from a very deep love for the land. Mahmud Darwish, the infinite voice of the longed-for Palestine, speaks about this love with heartfelt conscience:

"We don't need memories

because we carry Mount Carmel within us

and in our eyelids is the grass of Galilee.

Don't say: If only we could flow to my country like a river!

Don't say that!

Because we are in the flesh of our country

and our country is in our flesh."

To those who falsely assert that what has happened to the Palestinian people is not genocide, Deleuze points out with unfaltering lucidity that from the very beginning it has been a matter of acting as though the Palestinian people not only should not exist, but had never existed in the first place. This is the very essence of genocide: to decree that a people does not exist; to deny them the right to existence.

In that connection, the great Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo was quite right when he forcefully stated that the Biblical promise of the land of Judea and Samaria to the tribes of Israel was not a notarized property contract that authorized the eviction of those who were born and lived on that land. This is precisely why conflict resolution in the Middle East must, necessarily, bring justice to the Palestinian people; this is the only way to achieve peace.

It is upsetting and painful that the same people who suffered one of the worst examples of genocide in history have become the executioners of the Palestinian people; it is upsetting and painful that the heritage of the Holocaust should be the Nakba. And it is truly disturbing that Zionism continues to use the charge of anti-Semitism as blackmail against whoever opposes Zionist outrages and crimes. Israel has, blatantly and despicably, used and continues to use the memory of the victims. And it does so in order to act with complete impunity against Palestine. It is

worth mentioning that anti-Semitism is a Western and European scourge, in which the Arabs have no part. Let us also not forget that it is the Semite Palestinian people that suffers from the ethnic cleansing practiced by the Israeli colonialist State.

I want to make myself clear: it is one thing to reject anti-Semitism and an entirely different thing to passively accept that Zionist barbarity enforces an apartheid regime against the Palestinian people. From an ethical standpoint, those who denounce the former must condemn the latter.

A necessary digression: it is frankly improper to equate Zionism with Judaism. Throughout time we have been reminded of this by several Jewish intellectuals, including Albert Einstein and Erich Fromm. And today there are an ever-increasing number of concerned citizens in Israel itself who openly oppose Zionism and its criminal and terrorist practices.

It has to be spelled out: Zionism, as a world vision, is absolutely racist. Irrefutable proof of this can be seen in the terrifyingly cynical words of Golda Meir: "How can we return the occupied territories? There is nobody to return them to." "There were no such things as Palestinians ... It was not as though there was a Palestinian people ... considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist."

It is important to remember that from the end of the nineteenth century, Zionism called for the return of the Jewish people to Palestine and the creation of a national State of their own. This approach was beneficial for French and British colonialism, as it would later be for Yankee imperialism. The West has always encouraged and supported the Zionist occupation of Palestine by military means.

Read and re-read the document historically known as the Balfour Declaration of 1917: the British Government arrogated to itself the authority to promise a national home in Palestine to the Jews, deliberately ignoring the presence and wishes of its inhabitants. It should be added that Christians and Muslims lived in peace for centuries in the Holy Land, up until the time when Zionism began to claim it as its complete and exclusive property.

Let us recall that, beginning in the second decade of the twentieth century, Zionism started to develop its expansionist plans by taking advantage of the British colonial occupation of Palestine. By the end of the Second World War, the Palestinian people's tragedy had worsened, as they were expelled from their territory and, at the same time, from history. In 1947, the despicable and illegal General Assembly resolution 181 recommended the partition of Palestine into a Jewish State, an Arab State and an area under international control (Jerusalem and Bethlehem). Shamefully, 56 per cent of the territory was granted to Zionism to establish its State. In fact, that resolution violated international law and blatantly ignored the will of the vast Arab majority: the right to self-determination of peoples became a dead letter.

From 1948 to the present time, the Zionist State has continued with its criminal strategy against the Palestinian people, with the constant support of its unconditional ally: the United States of America. This unconditional allegiance is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Israel directs and sets United States international policy on the Middle East. That is why the great Palestinian and universal conscience, Edward Said, stated that any peace agreement built on the

alliance with the United States would be an alliance that confirmed Zionist power, rather than confronting it.

Now then: contrary to what Israel and the United States are trying to make the world believe through transnational media outlets, what happened and is still happening in Palestine — in Said's words — is not a religious conflict but a political one, with a colonial and imperialist stamp; it is not an age-old conflict, but a contemporary one; this conflict did not begin in the Middle East but in Europe.

What was and still is at the heart of the conflict? Debate and discussion have given priority to Israel's security, while ignoring that of Palestine. This is corroborated by recent events; it is enough to recall the latest act of genocide set off by Israel during its "Operation Cast Lead" in Gaza.

Palestine's security cannot be reduced to mere acknowledgement of a limited self-government and self-policing in its "enclaves" along the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip, leaving aside not only the creation of a Palestinian State with pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, the rights of its citizens and their self-determination as a people, but also, as established by General Assembly resolution 194, the issue of compensation and subsequent return to the homeland of the 50 per cent of the Palestinian population that is scattered all over the world.

It is incredible that a country (Israel) which owes its existence to a General Assembly resolution could be so disdainful of the resolutions issued by the United Nations, as Miguel D'Escoto noted when pleading for an end to the massacre of the people of Gaza in late 2008 and early 2009.

Mr. Secretary-General and distinguished representatives of the peoples of the world,

It is impossible to ignore the crisis in the United Nations. In 2005, before this same General Assembly, we argued that the United Nations model had become exhausted. The fact that the debate on the Palestinian issue has been delayed and that it is being openly sabotaged is a further confirmation of that fact.

For several days, Washington has been indicating that it will veto in the Security Council what will be a majority resolution of the General Assembly: the recognition of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations. In the declaration on recognition of the Palestinian State, Venezuela, together with the sister nations that make up the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), has always deplored that such a just aspiration could be blocked in this way. As we know, the empire, in this and other instances, is trying to impose its double standard on the world stage: Yankee double standards are violating international law in Libya, while allowing Israel to do whatever it wants, which makes the United States the main accomplice in the Palestinian genocide being carried out by the hands of Zionist barbarity. Edward Said touched a nerve when he wrote that Israeli interests in the United States have made that country's policy on the Middle East Israeli-centric.

I would like to conclude by quoting the words of Mahmud Darwish in his memorable poem "On This Earth":

"We have on this earth what makes life worth living:

On this earth, the Lady of earth, Mother of all beginnings

Mother of all ends. She was called ... Palestine.

Her name later became ... Palestine.

My Lady, because you are my Lady, I deserve life."

It will continue to be called Palestine. Palestine will live and will overcome! Long live free, sovereign and independent Palestine!

(*Signed*) Hugo **Chávez Frías**
President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela